

ONLINE & OUTDOORS

Blanket Statement

WITH INTERNATIONAL PICNIC DAY ON JUNE 18,
THE PROS GIVE THEIR TOP TIPS ON OUTDOOR DINING
BY SHERI RADFORD

E

Everyone knows that the first step in planning an al-fresco meal is choosing the right spot. Vancouver has an abundance of gorgeous parks and beaches to choose from but, on sunny days, these can be overrun with, well, people—not to mention errant Frisbees and meandering pooches threatening to disturb your setup or devour your Instagram-worthy spread.

For those looking to pull off a truly foolproof, picture-perfect picnic, Tarina Taylor and Kelly Bertrand of **Say Events** suggest renting a space, like a private farm. It may seem extravagant, but it will allow you to control the elements. The two have planned weddings, retreats and festivals but, during the pandemic, are shifting their focus to intimate outdoor dos. To make even a simple backyard picnic feel special, they recommend adding such thoughtful touches as elegant balloons from **Frankie & Co.** or **Balloon Studio** and fresh flower arrangements. Also consider renting décor pieces and outdoor furniture from **Ellssi**, **Past Pieces** or **Bespoke Decor**, particularly when it comes to organizing a picnic in celebration of a birthday or anniversary—or serving as the backdrop for a marriage proposal.



a picnic sin). Mouthwatering DIY options abound at specialty grocery shops like **Meinhardt Fine Foods**, the **Gourmet Warehouse** and **Urban Fare**. Or, grab a cheese box from **Saputo** and enjoy four fine Canadian selections. If you'd rather let someone else do the meal prep, then support a local resto by ordering a to-go box. A cornucopia of delicious takeout kits for convenient outdoor noshing are available from Vancouver favourites like **Juke Fried Chicken**, **Chanchito Tortilleria** and **St. Lawrence**. The Beach Bag Combo for Two from **Beetbox** comes in a cute organic bag for you to keep, and the plant-based eatery's new four-litre Beet the Heat Slushie Buckets are the perfect thirst-quenching accompaniment. Pretty much anything from the menu at **Railtown Cafe and Catering** is picnic-ready, but our top pick is the Parisian Picnic Lunch, with Niçoise salad, pâté, a house-made baguette and more.

Hopcott Farms packs its picnics in a charming wicker basket that looks ready for a photo shoot. **The Graze Company** has an array of boxes, including a vegan option filled with fruits, veggies, nuts, plant-based cheeses and chocolate. So, pack up and set out. Picnic season is here. ♡

“The Graze Company has an array of boxes, including a vegan option filled with fruits, veggies, nuts, plant-based cheeses and chocolate”



If you prefer to keep your outdoor gathering simple and low-key, and plan to arrange a few such events, you may invest in some fun picnic pieces. **Ikea's** Fjällmott picnic blanket has a waterproof backing and built-in carrying straps; a Turkish blanket from **B Yoga** is soft but durable. Basket wise, the large Sunnyside picnic basket from **Indigo** comes with plates, cups, cutlery, a bottle opener and a cutting board, plus an insulated cold compartment. Add to it some cloth napkins and cheese knives from **EQ3** and you're set. For a one-stop shop, **Bed Bath & Beyond** stocks everything from a practical Picnic Time folding sports chair to a chic Picnic at Ascot cake carrier. But our top pick has to be the Games Galore picnic blanket, printed with four classic board games, which can even be personalized with two lines of text.

Fun accessories aside, one mustn't forget the food (to do so would be



The Captain IS CALLING

ANSWER THE CALL